

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 9, 20, 22, 23, 26, 27, and 29-31 have been cancelled. Claims 5-7, 10-19, 24-25, and 32-46 remain pending.

Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) and §103(a)

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 3, 4, 9, 20, 22, 23, 27, 29, and 31 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Kudoh (U.S. 6008738). Further, the Examiner has rejected claims 8, 26, 30 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious in light of Kudoh. These rejections are respectfully traversed below.

The Examiner is thanked for allowing Claims 5-7, 10-19, and 24-25. Although the Applicant believes the rejected claims are patentably distinct from the art cited by the Examiner, in order to expedite the issuance of a Notice of Allowance, the Applicant elects to cancel Claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 9, 20, 22, 23, 26, 27, and 29-31, without prejudice with regard to future prosecution.

The Examiner is thanked for the telephonic interviews of October 19, 20, and 25, 2004. Furthermore, the Examiner is thanked for verbally agreeing on October 25, 2004 to enter and allow Claims 32-46, previously submitted with Amendment A, dated June 14, 2004, but not previously considered by the Examiner, which are dependent upon allowable claims 5-7.

Applicant believes that all pending claims are allowable and respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance for this application from the Examiner. Should the Examiner

believe that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application,
the undersigned can be reached at the telephone number set out below.

Respectfully submitted,

BEYER WEAVER & THOMAS, LLP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JBond".

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